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ABSTRACT

This study investigated relationships between two status variables--congruence and consensus--and team teacher satisfaction with the team situation. The sample consisted of 148 teacher teams (627 teachers) selected from 74 open-area schools. The results indicated that teachers on balanced teams and/or leaderless teams tended to be more satisfied than teachers on unbalanced teams and/or teams with formal leadership. In teams with formal leadership, teacher satisfaction was found to be positively related to status congruence, while in all teams status consensus was found to be positively related to team satisfaction with the team situation. (Appendixes include related charts and tables.) (Author)

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STATUS VARIABLES RELATED TO TEAM TEACHER SATISFACTION IN THE OPEN PLAN SCHOOL

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Introduction

The major purpose of this study was to determine the relationships between two status variables and team teacher satisfaction. The status variables considered were firstly, the degree of congruency between leadership status and personal status, and secondly, the degree of status consensus within a team. Leadership status in this case, was determined by the position of formal leadership within a teaching team, that is, a leadership position designated by the school principal. Personal status was determined by age, sex, educational background, team teaching experience and total teaching experience (personal characteristics). Since the model for status congruence borrowed from Sampson (1963) rests on individual expectations, individual team members were asked about their perceptions of the highest ranking personal characteristics. For status consensus, two operational definitions were tested, i.e., that proposed by Shelley (1960) and that given by Heslin and Dunphy (1964). As a secondary focus, this study set out to determine the relationships between the degree of team agreement on personal status and (i) the degree of team agreement on the rating of the formal leader and (ii) status consensus; also, the relationship between certain aspects of the team's leadership structure (e.g., existence of a formal leader vs. non-existance of a formal leader, balanced status structure vs. unbalanced status structure) and satisfaction with the team teaching situation were tested. With respect to personal status, it was predicted that team members would tend

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to rank as high, those personal characteristics most like themselves. As a final step, the relationship between teacher satisfaction with team teaching situation and satisfaction with teaching were tested.

Research Design

Seventy-one open plan schools distributed among five county school boards in Ontario, participated in this study. From among these schools, 134 teams comprised of 529 teachers who engage in joint planning of lessons and joint evaluation of pupils, and who belong to teams of three or more members, constituted the sample. These team teachers were identified by a preliminary questionnaire answered by their school principals, and each teacher subsequently responded to a questionnaire which addressed itself to five areas or categories of information: (1) personal data, (2) team information, (3) satisfaction with the team teaching situation, (4) satisfaction with teaching, and (5) status expectations.

The entropy formula borrowed from thermodynamics, was used to obtain measures for degree of agreement among team members (consensus). The Pearson coefficient of correlation and the multiple linear regression technique were the statistical tools used to test the significance of the relationships.

Results

From among the hypotheses tested, the following were statistically confirmed: (1) the degree to which the team rates the formal leader highly on adequacy as a choice for the position (status consensus as operationalized by Heslin and Dunphy) is positively related to team satisfaction with the team teaching situation ($r = 0.575$, $p \leq .01$; $N = 34$); (2) team members tend to stress as important status criteria, those personal characteristics which are more like their own (Table 1); (3) Team members ($N = 357$) without formal leaders are more likely to report greater satisfaction with the team teaching

situation than team members (N = 172) with formal leaders (F = 8.21, $p \leq .01$); (4) team members (N = 198) who perceive their teams as being balanced (in terms of status structure) are more likely to report greater satisfaction with the team teaching situation than team members (N = 331) who perceive their teams as being unbalanced ($F = 5.46, p \leq .05$); (5) satisfaction with the team teaching situation is positively related to satisfaction with teaching (Table 2). In addition to these findings, the following results were found: (1) the degree of team agreement on the ranking of the personal characteristics was not significantly related to the degree of team agreement on (a) the rating of the formal leader, or (b) the highest ranking team member; (2) status congruence was not significantly related to teacher satisfaction with the team teaching situation; and (3) status consensus (as defined by Shelley) was not significantly related to satisfaction with the team teaching situation.

Implications

The results of this study have led to a better understanding of some of the variables related to team teacher satisfaction. These results hold implications not only for theory, but also for practice.

In terms of theoretical implications, the non-confirmation of the hypothesis using Shelley's definition of status consensus, has laid open to question the generalizability (to all small groups) of his model which relates this consensus to satisfaction. The results have also indicated that Heslin and Dunphy's operational definition of status consensus is the more accurate predictor of team satisfaction in this instance. The results of testing Sampson's model of status congruence appear to indicate that perceived lack of congruence does not, by itself, produce decreased satisfaction, but that degrees of incongruence (i.e., how strongly incongruence

is felt) are important factors to consider. For example, a team member might strongly feel that congruence in terms of the possession of certain leadership skills and the leadership position is very important, but only mildly feel that congruence in terms of personal status (based on age, sex, education and teaching experience) and the leadership position is important. In the first example, the relationship between status congruence and satisfaction may be very strong, while in the second case, a positive relationship might exist but it may not be significant. Therefore, in terms of future research, it might be useful to examine the differing degrees of congruence and incongruence and their relationship to satisfaction.

With respect to implications for practice, a number of findings made by this study provides information related to team construction. Firstly, the existence of a formal leader on a team was found to have a significant influence on team member satisfaction, with those members on teams with formal leaders being significantly less satisfied than those members on teams without formal leaders. Furthermore, the rating of the formal leader in terms of adequacy as a choice for the position was found to be positively related to satisfaction with the team teaching situation.

Although attempts were not made (by this study) to find the leader whose qualities are such that satisfaction with the team teaching situation is high among team members, when the latter were asked to describe the most desirable leader in terms of sex, age, educational background, lengths of total and team teaching experience, the results indicated that with respect to the last four characteristics (each of which represent a continuum), teachers tended to (a) select those characteristics more like themselves, and (b) not select their leaders from the extremeties of the continua. For example, when comparing younger teachers with older teachers, the younger teachers

tended to select younger leaders than did the older teachers. At the same time, when considering teachers from all age levels, the teachers tended to not select leaders from either the youngest level (20 years or under) or the oldest level (45 years or over). See Table 1. With respect to sex, however, both male and female teachers tended to select male leaders.

Also holding implications for team construction, is the finding that heterogeneity of team members in terms of age, education, total and team teaching experience, was not significantly related to satisfaction with the team teaching situation. Although the relationship between heterogeneity in terms of sex, and satisfaction with the team teaching situation, did not quite reach significance, there were indications that heterogeneous teams were more satisfied than homogeneous teams.

In terms of team size, when comparing three, four, and five member teams, the team members belonging to smaller teams were found to be significantly more satisfied with the team teaching situation than team members belonging to the larger teams ($F = 5.339$, $p \leq .01$; $N = 134$). Finally, when team members were asked "Was it your choice to teach in the team teaching situation?", it was found that the degree of choice (e.g., no choice, partial choice, complete choice) was positively related to member satisfaction with the team teaching situation (Table 3). In summary therefore, the most satisfied team members appear to be those (a) coming from three-man teams in which there is a balanced status structure (and no formal leadership) and (b) who were given a choice in the decision to team teach.

References

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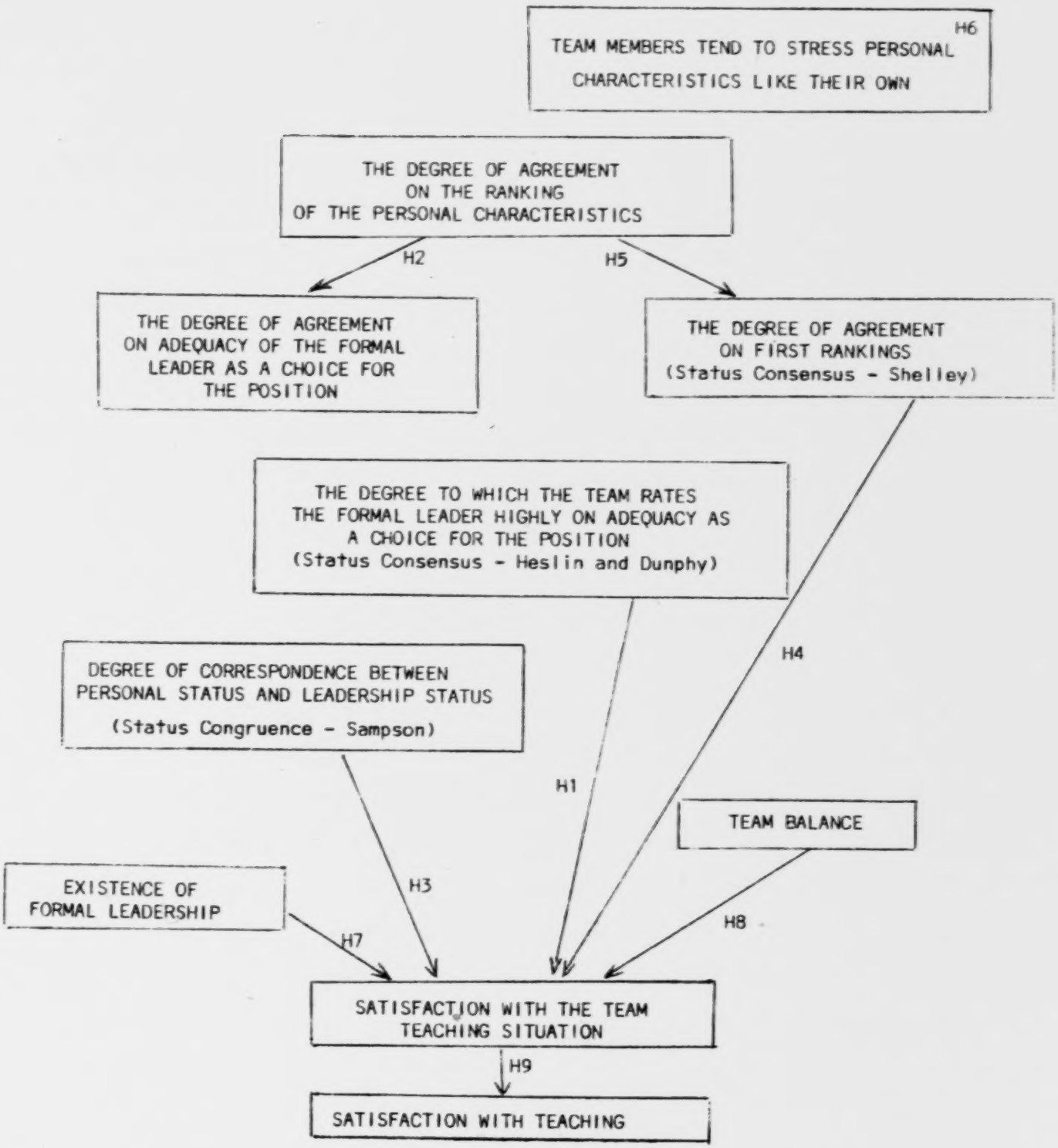
Shelley, H. P. "Status Consensus, Leadership and Satisfaction with the Group." Journal of Social Psychology, LI (1960), 157-164.

MODEL OF THE RELATIONSHIPS TESTED


TEAM MEMBERS TEND TO STRESS PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS LIKE THEIR OWN
H6
THE DEGREE OF AGREEMENT ON THE RANKING OF THE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS
H2
H5
THE DEGREE OF AGREEMENT ON ADEQUACY OF THE FORMAL LEADER AS A CHOICE FOR THE POSITION
THE DEGREE OF AGREEMENT ON FIRST RANKINGS (Status Consensus - Shelley)
THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE TEAM RATES THE FORMAL LEADER HIGHLY ON ADEQUACY AS A CHOICE FOR THE POSITION (Status Consensus - Heslin and Dunphy)
H4
DEGREE OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PERSONAL STATUS AND LEADERSHIP STATUS (Status Congruence - Sampson)
H1
TEAM BALANCE
EXISTENCE OF FORMAL LEADERSHIP
H3
H8
H7
SATISFACTION WITH THE TEAM TEACHING SITUATION
H9
SATISFACTION WITH TEACHING

MEAN IDEAL RESPONSES OF TEAM TEACHERS BELONGING TO EACH OF THE LEVELS OF THE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Personal Characteristics	Levels of Each Personal Characteristic ** 1	2	3	4	5	F
Age	2.55	2.84	3.05	3.40	3.54	22.55*
Teaching Experience (total)	2.59	3.56	2.95	3.31	3.30	17.39*
Team Teaching Experience	3.66	3.55	3.72	4.08	4.13	3.52*
Educational Background	2.30	2.90	3.40	3.92	4.29	36.91*
Sex	0.43	0.08				79.62*

N = 529

* $P \leq .01$

** Interpretation of these levels:

Age	*Total Teaching Experience*	*Team Teaching Experience*	*Educational Background*	*Sex*
1) 20 years or under	*1) less than 3 years*	*1) less than 1 year*	*1) Standard 1*	*1) female*
2) 21 - 24 years	*2) 3 - 5 years*	*2) less than 2 years*	*2) Standard 2 or 3*	*2) male*
3) 25 - 34 years	*3) 6 - 12 years*	*3) less than 3 years*	*3) Standard 4 (type B)*	
4) 35 - 44 years	*4) 13 - 24 years*	*4) less than 4 years*	*4) Standard 4 (type A)*	
5) 45 years or over	*5) over 24 years*	*5) 4 years or over*	*5) Postgraduate degree*	

Table 1

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

INDICATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SATISFACTION

WITH THE TEAM TEACHING SITUATION

AND SATISFACTION WITH TEACHING

		Satisfaction with the Team Teaching Situation
		r
Satisfaction with Teaching	Factor I *Teaching as it personally affects the individual*	.1650 *
	Factor II *Teaching as a profession*	.0659
	Factor III *Student contacts and relationships in teaching*	.1533 *
	Factor IV *Professional ability as a teacher*	.1157 *
	Factor V *Satisfaction and success in the present position*	.3875 *

* Significant at the .01 level

Table 2

MEAN SATISFACTION SCORES OF TEAM TEACHERS

WHO HAD BEEN GIVEN VARYING DEGREES

OF CHOICE TO TEAM TEACH

Degree of Choice	Mean Satisfaction Score*	N
No Choice	2.769	149
Partial Choice	2.569	192
Complete Choice	2.181	188

$F = 9.532 \quad p \leq .01$

* Scores range from 7 ("negative" side of the semantic differential) to 1 ("positive" side of the semantic differential)

Table 3